

Questioned Documents Unit (QDU) Training and Continuing Education Procedures

1 Scope

This document addresses training and details the procedures for continuing education for all employees of the Questioned Documents Unit (QDU) and supplements the requirements found in the *FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual* and the *FBI Laboratory Operations Manual - Practices for the Forensic Examiner Training Program*. The training program of the QDU is detailed in the *QDU Training Manuals*. These manuals are divided into modules that encompass numerous critical subject areas. Upon completion of the modules, the trainee will be tested (oral, written, or both) to demonstrate their comprehension and proficiency in that subject area. Furthermore, trainees will receive training samples as well as current casework samples and will be required to demonstrate competency by analyzing these samples correctly.

2 Records

2.1 All records related to training of personnel within the QDU will be maintained by the QDU Training Program Manager in individual personnel folders. This includes monthly and quarterly reviews regarding a trainee's activities and progress, electronic communications recording the completion of a training program, certificates recording completion of other training courses that have been taken, case review sheets, oral board and moot court evaluation sheets, and any other pertinent records. Records concerning continuing education completed by examiners and analysts will be maintained.

2.2 Forensic Examiner Trainees (FET) will maintain a training log and must fulfill training requirements as outlined in the *Document Analyst Training Syllabus*, the *QDU Training Manuals*, *FBI Laboratory Practices for the Forensic Examiner Training Program*, *FBI Practices for Oral Board Exercises*, and *FBI Laboratory Practices for Moot Court and Admissibility Hearing Exercises*.

2.3 The appropriate discipline Training Program Manager or designee will review the FET's training log on a monthly basis; this review will be recorded and maintained in the FET's training record.

2.4 The discipline Training Program Manager or designee will provide feedback to the FET, at a minimum on a quarterly basis, using the *Forensic Examiner Training Evaluation* (7-270).

3 Training

All employees within the QDU will receive training in evidence handling and forensic ethics prior to beginning any casework. This training will include the appropriate behavior and ethical practices in forensic science in general, as well as within their discipline, as appropriate. The ethical practices in forensic science training will be covered by reviewing The Application of Ethical Practices in Forensic Sciences PowerPoint which is available in Virtual Academy.

3.1 Training Forensic Examiner Trainees

Document Examination and Impressions discipline trainees will receive training in numerous topics. For additional information regarding the content of the training programs, please refer to the *Questioned Document Unit (QDU) Document Analyst Training Syllabus*, the *Training Manual for Footwear and Tire Tread Forensic Examiner*, and the *Questioned Document Unit (QDU) Training Program for Document Analysts*. Each trainee will be assigned a mentor(s) throughout the duration of their training program and the mentor(s) will assist the Training Program Manager (or designee) with the training and evaluation process of the trainee.

3.1.1 The training program in the QDU is intended to cover the areas necessary to prepare the trainee to become an examiner in their discipline. Its purpose is to provide a structured period of training which will enable the trainee to establish a firm foundation from which further study, development, and competency may occur. Incorporated in this training period are reference reviews, specialized training, specialty-related tours, and independent research. The training program will be administered in accordance with the *FBI Laboratory Operations Manual – Practices for the Forensic Examiner Training Program*.

3.1.2 Each examiner trainee will be provided with the requirements of the training program, a training plan outlining the requirements to become qualified in a particular discipline, and a training schedule with milestone dates. This training plan will be developed by the discipline Training Program Manager, the UC, the trainee's mentor(s), and other appropriate unit personnel.

3.1.2.1 Prior to the initiation of the Forensic Examiner Training Program, the Technical Leader will conduct an assessment of an FET's knowledge and skills to determine if any modifications to the FE training program are needed. This applies to both FETs with no previous experience, as well as FETs with prior experience.

3.1.2.1.1 An FET assigned to the QDU (without prior experience) will undergo approximately two years of training in the Document Examination and/or Impressions (footwear/tire) discipline.

3.1.2.1.2 When hiring an experienced examiner, the QDU will follow the *FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual* to assess previous training and determine if any modifications are necessary for their training program.

3.1.2.2 The training plan will be provided to the FET within 45 calendar days of initiating the training program. All training plans must be approved by the appropriate Technical Leader and the trainee's Unit Chief.

3.2 Training New Analysts (Technicians)

3.2.1 New analysts assigned to the QDU will undergo approximately 1 to 3 months of training in selected areas of questioned documents and/or footwear/tire tread examinations. The trainee will receive instruction and training in Laboratory administration, safety, evidence handling procedures, evidence processing, forensic ethics, instrumentation, quality assurance, quality control, courtroom testimony, analysis of selected questioned document areas, and the use and application of specialized equipment.

3.2.2 Each new trainee will be provided with the requirements of the training program and a training plan. This training plan will be developed by the appropriate discipline Training Program Manager, the UC, and other appropriate unit personnel.

3.3 Redacted

3.4 Remedial Training for Experienced Analysts and Examiners

At times, it may be necessary to provide remedial training for experienced analysts and examiners (e.g., an unsatisfactory proficiency test, improper use of a validated protocol). In these instances the *FBI Laboratory Practices for Addressing a Nonconformity* will be followed and a remedial training plan will be developed by the discipline Training Program Manager or designee for the analyst or examiner to ensure their proper level of understanding of the issue at hand.

4 Continuing Education for All QDU Personnel

4.1 Each employee within the QDU is required to take a minimum of 8 hours of continuing education each review year. The majority of continuing education hours must be related to the topics of questioned documents, forensics in general, leadership, or relevant work practices with no more than 3 of the 8 hours attributed to FBI or Laboratory mandated annual training.

4.2 Continuing education training topics and courses in the QDU are chosen by the employee and their UC or supervisor. Acceptable topics of training must directly relate to the employee's current job requirements and should focus on maintaining skills and expertise in their discipline. For example, this training may include instrument courses, relevant workshops at scientific meetings, management courses, training provided in the QDU, factory tours, and computer courses. Discussion between an employee and their supervisor and/or Unit Chief will occur prior to receiving continuing education.

5 References

FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual

FBI Laboratory Operations Manual

ASTM E 2388, "Standard Guide for Minimum Training Requirements for Forensic Document Examiners," *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.

Questioned Documents Unit Training Manuals

Questioned Documents Unit Document Analyst Training Syllabus

QDU Standard Operating Procedures Manual

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
8	09/26/19	<p>Section 2.1 added “and quarterly” “recording” “recording” “records” and deleted “documenting” “documenting” “documents” Section 2.2 added “<i>FBI Laboratory Practices for the Forensic Examiner Training Program, FBI Practices for Oral Board Exercises, and FBI Laboratory Practices for Moot Court and Admissibility Hearing Exercises.</i>” and deleted “and” Section 3 added “evidence handling as well as” “prior to beginning any casework.” Section 3.1 added “including Daubert and ASSTR” Section 3.1.2.2 added “appropriate” and deleted “discipline’s” Redacted</p>
9	04/01/21	<p>Added “3.3.2 Each new contractor will be provided with the requirements of the training program and a training plan. This training will be developed by the appropriate discipline Training Program Manager, the UC, and/or other appropriate unit personnel.” Re-numbered sections and new “4.4” title changed to “Continuing Education for All QDU Personnel.” Deleted last paragraph, no longer a requirement to review the effectiveness of training.”</p> <p>Replaced “his/her” with “their” and “category(ies) of testing” with “discipline” throughout the document. In section 2.1 changed “may also” to “will be”. Edited title of section 3 to remove “and Continuing Education”, edited the first sentence of section 3 for clarity, and corrected numbering in section 4. Added “or designee” to sections 2.3, 2.4, and 3.1. Rewrote the first paragraph of section 3.1 for clarity, and in section 3.1.2.1.1 changed “questioned documents” to “the Document Examination” and “footwear/tire treads” to “Impressions (footwear/tire) discipline”. Also removed “and their application to the analysis and comparison of evidentiary materials for the evaluation and interpretation of such” from section 3.1.2.1.1. Removed “document” from “document analyst” and changed “failed” to “an unsatisfactory” in section 3.4 and removed “3.4.1” numbering for consistency with other sections.</p>

Redacted - Signatures on File

Approval

Questioned Documents
Unit Chief

Date: 04/14/2021

Questioned Documents
Technical Leader

Date: 04/14/2021

Footwear/Tire Tread
Technical Leader

Date: 04/14/2021

QA Approval

Quality Manager

Date: 04/14/2021